

Moorhead House,
Moorheadville, Pennsylvania

HABS No. Pa.-51

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PHOTOGRAPHS,
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 5- Pennsylvania

Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings

Historic American Buildings Survey,
Karl E. Morrison, District Officer
319 Marine Bank Bldg., Erie, Pennsylvania

MOORHEAD HOUSE
Moorheadville, Erie County, Pennsylvania

Owner.

Moorhead Family.

Date of Erection

1810.

Architect

Unknown.

Builder

Unknown.

Present Condition

Good.

Number of Stories

Two, attic and basement.

Materials of Construction:

Native woods, field stone, brick.

Other Existing Records:

No historical record, several biographical records of family, court records of property transfers, etc., genealogical work by the present historian.

Additional Data-Bibliography:

History of Erie County, Pennsylvania; Chicago, Warner Beers and Co. 1884.

A Twentieth Century history of Erie County, Pennsylvania-Egle, William H. M. D., Harrisburg, DeWitt C. Goodrich & Co. 1876.
Erie County by Isaac Moorhead.

History of Erie County, Pennsylvania, 2 Vols. Historical Publishing Company 1925. Topeka--Indianapolis, by J. E. Reed (John Elmer).

History of Erie County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia, Lippincott Co. 1861 by L. G. Sanford (Laura G.) Published by author and copyrighted by her in 1894.

Nelson's biographical dictionary and historical reference book of Erie County, Pennsylvania, Erie, 1896. Biography and history of about two-thirds of this book by Benjamin Whitman. From the press of Wilson, Humphries and Co. Fourth St., Logansport, Indiana.

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MOORHEAD HOUSE
Moorheadville, Erie County, Pennsylvania

The Moorhead House is located in the township of Harborcreek, Erie County, Pennsylvania. It is quite an imposing structure. The older part of the building was constructed approximately in 1810, and is therefore one of the oldest residences in Erie County. It is a two-story, (with basement and attic) house. The older portion was originally an inn kept by the progenitor of the Moorhead family in Erie County.

The ancestor of the Moorhead family in America was Thomas Moorhead, a native of county Donegal, Ireland who settled in Donegal, Pennsylvania in 1732. His wife, Christine Robinson was a sister of Andrew Robinson. Thomas and Christin Moorhead had six children, two sons and four daughters.

James, the oldest son married Catherine Byers, daughter of John Byers, and sometime between 1800 and 1805 James and his five sons and three daughters came from Lancaster County to Erie County and settled at what was afterward called Moorheadville.

Robert Moorhead, Sr. the son of James was born September 1787 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. He married Jane McCreary, and was a soldier of the War 1812-14 in Captain James Barr's company. He belonged to the Masonic fraternity and was at one time road commissioner. He left one son James R. Moorhead and other descendants.

George Moorhead, another son of James, married Matilda, fourth child of Moses Barnett. They had five children, four of whom lived to mature years and left descendants. He died in 1861 and she died in 1874. John Moorhead, a third son of James, married Eleanor Laughhead. His grandson Robert Joseph Moorhead in 1898 was a National Bank Examiner, and later became president of the Security Bank of Erie, Pennsylvania.

Thomas Moorhead, a fourth son of James, married Rebekah, sixth and youngest daughter of Moses Barnett. They had two sons and three daughters. Isaac, one of the sons has probably left the only printed record about this residence. He says, in "Old Times in Erie", "I have heard my father's oldest sister say that the young ladies of that region gathered at the inn kept by my Grandfather and crowded the porch, waving their handkerchiefs as the company arrived in the evening----- One day's march from Erie to Buffalo always brought the detachment to Moorheads my Grandfather's."

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James Moorhead, the fifth son of James, married Eliza McCord. He died in 1842 and was a teamster in the war of 1812-14, breveted Colonel. He also helped to get Oliver Hazard Perry's fleet out of port. He received a pension from the government for services rendered in this war. He was County Commissioner for one term in Erie County and was one of those who opened the first Sabbath School in Erie County in 1817. He was president of the Erie County Anti-Slavery Society in 1836.

Jane Moorhead married William McCord, Sr., as his first wife. There is no record of Sarah Moorhead, nor the other daughter available at present, nor of the famous men and women who may have visited the Inn in the days of 1812 or afterward.

The Moorhead residence was built close to the Buffalo Road, and was used originally as a tavern. It was well constructed, but has undergone considerable alteration, and shows a variety of types of architecture. The newer addition contains the kitchen, pantry, etc., opening into a wide hall on the first floor of the older structure. This colonial hall runs the whole depth of the original house. There are seven doors opening into it. Two of these doors at the back lead into the kitchen portion, one door opens into the den, one into the dining room, two into the living room and one to the large colonial front entrance. The living room extends the whole width of the main building.

The front door has a massive double lock-set on the door and jamb. This door leads out to the recently constructed portico.

A colonial stairway rises in the hallway from near the front entrance. It is simple in design with hand-turned balusters and newel to match, with rail projecting beyond newel with spiral return. Eleven steps lead to a landing with a sharp turn to the left, and four additional steps bring the stairway to the second floor. There are four bedrooms on the second floor in the older portion of the house, and two bedrooms, bath and hall in the newer part.

The older portion of the house is almost rectangular. The walls of the basement are of field stone, faced with cement plaster and then marked in three courses. All of the windows in the original building have fifteen lights of glass.

The living room has two sets of French doors that lead out onto a very large porch on the east side of the building. This porch has an open top deck supported by six large round columns of Doric influence. There is a Dutch gable, two false chimneys both in front and rear of the older part. Most of the windows are equipped with shutters.

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MOORHEAD HOUSE

The vast living room and the hallway contend equally for first place in attention. Possibly the front entrance may be said to be the second out-standing feature of this residence. It is a purely colonial doorway, with side panels of wood and glass flanking the paneled door.

One feature which would undoubtedly impress an investigator of the folks who lived here, or who were connected with the family who occupied this residence, is the very large number of property transactions in which they were involved, the great number of will and other records, but at the same time the scarcity of unique or startling incidents or historical data that usually cluster around ancient places and people.

Anne Scott Baxter

Approved

Karl Furman Dist. off.
July 27, 1936.

Revised July 30 1936.